



January 30, 2013

Global Zero Questions for Chuck Hagel

According to its web site, the Global Zero movement advocates the elimination of nuclear weapons. In furtherance of that goal, Senator Hagel and others issued a [report](#) last year for this organization proposing a U.S. nuclear force posture and policy for the 21st century. This past Monday, his co-authors on that report [issued](#) a press release purporting to set “the record straight on Chuck Hagel’s global zero position on nuclear weapons.” That press release raises more questions that should be asked of former Senator Hagel in the confirmation process.

Global Zero Report Recommends Unilateral Nuclear Reductions

The press release begins by claiming the authors of the report “are not unilateralists.” It goes on to say the authors “support bilateral, negotiated, verifiable U.S.-Russian arms reductions, to be followed by multilateral negotiations.”

In recommending close to a 75 percent reduction in the number of deployed nuclear warheads, page 1 of the Global Zero report itself reads as follows, with emphasis added: “These steps could be taken with Russia in unison through reciprocal presidential directives, negotiated in another round of bilateral arms reduction talks, or implemented unilaterally.” Page 16 of that same report reads: “The reductions and de-alerting proposed under this illustrative plan could be carried out in unison by the United States and Russia through reciprocal presidential directives, negotiated in another round of bilateral arms reduction talks, or implemented unilaterally.” While acknowledging that unilateral implementation is a “less good approach,” page 18 of the report says “a strong case” could be made for “unilateral deep U.S. cuts.” The Global Zero report therefore by its own terms is unilateralist, recommending that one potential course of action for massive U.S. nuclear reductions is that they be completed unilaterally.

- Do you disavow the part of the Global Zero report you authored recommending the United States implement nuclear reductions unilaterally?

More concerning, from the Senate’s point of view, the Global Zero report recommends as another course of action wholly ignoring the Senate in arms control agreements with Russia, saying nuclear reductions could be “carried out in unison by the United States and Russia through reciprocal presidential directives.” Secretary Panetta, on the other hand, has taken the

[position](#) that arms reductions would take place in the Obama Administration only as a result of an arms control treaty process. He said, “reductions that have been made, at least in this Administration, have only been made as part of the START process and not outside of that process; and I would expect that that would be the same in the future.” This makes sense, as nuclear reductions are almost always completed by treaty. As the Congressional Research Service has [observed](#), “[a]rms control treaties are the only category of agreement in the political-military field that have been concluded primarily in treaty form.”

- Do you disavow the part of the Global Zero report you authored recommending the United States implement nuclear reductions via presidential directive and instead support the current Obama Administration position that nuclear reductions will take place only under the treaty-making power of the President articulated in Article Two, Section Two, Clause Two of the Constitution, requiring consent of two-thirds of the Senate?

U.S. Is Already Leading by Example on Nonproliferation

The press release by the Global Zero report co-authors goes on to say “the United States and Russia must lead the way with a bilateral accord for deep reductions.” The Global Zero report on page 18 says its recommendations of “deep cuts...would strongly validate the Non-Proliferation Treaty and help preserve it in the face of challenges by North Korea, Iran and other prospective proliferators.” The United States has been reducing its nuclear arsenal for the past 40 years.

- If we were to implement the recommendations of the Global Zero report, what benefits to the nonproliferation regime can be expected to come from these particular reductions that have not come from the previous 40 years of U.S. nuclear reductions?
- In the past 40 years, while we have been setting the example of reducing our nuclear arsenal, do you agree that China, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, and India have done nothing but expand and modernize their nuclear arsenals?
- What empirical evidence would you point to in support of the proposition that any of these countries will cut their nuclear arsenals as we cut our arsenal, like we have been for the past 40 years?

Global Zero Is Out of the Mainstream on De-alerting

The press release by the Global Zero report co-authors goes on to say the current alert posture of U.S. nuclear weapons “poorly serves our security needs.” The U.S. Strategic Posture [Commission](#), on the other hand, made the following analysis in evaluating “de-alerting” recommendations: “The alert postures of both countries [United States and Russia] are in fact highly stable. They are subject to multiple layers of control, ensuring clear civilian and indeed presidential decision-making.” President Obama’s 2010 Nuclear Posture [Review](#) concluded the current alert posture should be maintained.

- Why does President Obama’s decision in the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review to leave the current alert posture in place poorly serve our security needs?

- What is incorrect about the Strategic Posture Commission's analysis such that the Global Zero press release is correct in saying the current alert posture of U.S. nuclear weapons poorly serves our security needs?

The Global Zero Report Advocates Constraining U.S. Missile Defenses

Finally, the press release is a good reminder of how the report advocates deep reductions in the U.S. nuclear arsenal. The report says on pages 12 and 17 one of the ways to achieve them in a bilateral accord with Russia is to constrain U.S. missile defenses to “reassure Russia that its strategic missile force would not be put in jeopardy” by the U.S. system. The report goes on to observe Russia has sought a formal guarantee that our missile defenses will not be aimed at Russia and will not undermine Russia’s strategic deterrent forces, and it assesses that because we have not acquiesced to this demand, the arms control process has stalled.

We have already made clear on innumerable occasions the U.S. missile defense system is not directed at Russia’s strategic deterrent. For example, during consideration of New START, an Obama Administration official [told](#) Congress, “we have discussed with Russia why we believe our missile defense efforts...are not a threat to Russia’s strategic deterrent.” The head of the Missile Defense Agency said that agency is not “attempt[ing] to develop a system to defend” against the Russian nuclear posture. Indeed, the Obama Administration’s own Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report [says](#) the Russian nuclear capability is “not the focus of U.S. BMD,” and that the U.S. system “does not have the capacity to cope with large scale Russian or Chinese missile attacks, and is not intended to affect the strategic balance with those countries.” The Obama Administration in that report also articulates the clear position that it “will continue to reject any negotiated restraints on U.S. ballistic missile defenses.”

- Do you agree with the position that the United States should not be in the business of providing legal guarantees or otherwise providing political assurances to other countries limiting U.S. missile defense capabilities?